

VZCZCXRO2339  
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHGB #1369 1460600  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 260600Z MAY 09  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3198  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 001369

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/22/2024

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: BARHAM SALIH TO RESIGN DPM POST IN ORDER TO RUN IN  
KRG ELECTIONS

REF: A. BAGHDAD 514

[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 623

Classified By: Acting Political Minister Counselor John G. Fox for reasons 1.4 (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih is likely to resign in the next week in order to place his name on the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) plenum candidate list for Prime Minister in the upcoming Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) elections. Salih's staff informed PolOff that Salih will return to Baghdad on May 25 to bid his farewell. Several contacts inside the PUK and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) have revealed that KRG Speaker Adnan Mufti will take Barham's place as Deputy Prime Minister in Baghdad. In addition, Fadhil Merani is slated for KRG Deputy Prime Minister and Nechirvan Barzani possibly as the KRG President's Special Envoy for the proposed Task Force to address Disputed Internal Boundaries (DIBs). End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) On May 24, President's Advisor Aram Yarwessi told PolOff that the PUK plenum is scheduled for June 1. At that time all candidates running in the KRG elections must resign from current government posts prior to being named on the official candidate lists. Both Barham Salih's Aides Araz Rahman and Soran Aziz told PolOff on May 24 that DPM Salih will return to Baghdad on May 25 to announce his resignation and bid farewell. Back in January 2009 (refs A and B), PUK General Secretary Jalal Talabani named Barham Salih to replace Nechirvan Barzani (KDP) as the KRG Prime Minister. Although there were rumors that Talabani would leave Nechirvan Barzani in the position, internal PUK squabbles forced him to name a strong PUK candidate to take Nechirvan's place.

[1](#)3. (C) PUK parliamentarian Abdullah Mohammed Ali told PolOff on May 17 that KRG Speaker Adnan Mufti is slated to replace Barham as the interim Kurdish Deputy Prime Minister in Baghdad. He intimated that Mufti had called him inquiring about housing, badging, and the security situation in Baghdad. News has reached over the Kurdish divide with both KDP rank-and-file parliamentarians Vian Sadiq Mustafa and Ahlam As'ad Muhammad Mustafa hoping that Adnan is as strong as Barham in the job. Acting Kurdish Alliance Head PUK parliamentarian Friad Rwanduzi told PolOffs on May 21 that Mufti is weak and is no match for Prime Minister Maliki. He admitted that the PUK has no bench and Mufti will have to suffice as a placeholder in the interim.

[1](#)4. (C) In addition to Barham Salih becoming KRG PM, on May 25, Yarwessi told PolOff that current KDP Politburo head Fadhil Merani will become the KRG Deputy Prime Minister and current Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani could be named KRG President's Special Envoy for the proposed High-Level Task Force that will discuss DIBs with an as-yet-unnamed GOI interlocutor. RRT Erbil colleagues have heard similar reports.  
HILL